

VALLEY FREE PRESS

THE LEHIGH VALLEY'S
GAY & LESBIAN OPINION / NEWSPAPER

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JULY 2001



PRIDE FESTIVAL - SPECIAL ISSUE

THIS YEAR'S PRIDE FESTIVAL THEME IS EMBRACE DIVERSITY



GAIL HOOVER WINS PRIMARY

Our community's candidate Gail Hoover has passed the first obstacle in her election to Allentown City Council by winning the Primary on May 15. VFP congratulates Gail and wishes her all the best in the coming months during her campaign for the general election.

Last Wednesday night, local activists took a break from Pride Festival preparations to attend Pride's film festival. (From left) Democratic Nominee for Allentown City Council Gail Hoover, Pride Board member Constance Kristofik, Pride Secretary and Parade Chair Tom Cormier, pride VP Brenda Hoelman, Pride Board member and GLOSS Leader John Early, Pride President and Atown HRC member Allyson Hamm, PA-GALALV Co-Chair and VFP Editor Trish Sullivan, Pride Treasurer Tabatha Gartner, Pride Film Committee member Chris Boes.

VALLEY FREE PRESS IS 3 YEARS OLD

PRIDE PARADE'S GRAND MARSHALL

Since the first Lehigh Valley Pride Festival seven years ago, our local GLBT community has seen tremendous political progress at the state and local levels. I'm very proud to have been a part of it.

As you all know, there is still a great deal of work to be done. We must not settle for anything less than full equality, and we will not stop until it is achieved.



STEVE BLACK

EPISCOPAL DIOCESE SIGNS ON TO ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Bishop Paul Marshall has contacted the Valley Free Press to say that he personally and as representative of the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem (which represents the 14 counties in the Northeastern section of PA) will sign on to the VFP Statement of Anti-Discrimination (see page 8).

Bishop Marshall also stated that he would be willing to attend government hearings to speak in favor of legislation which would provide legal non-discrimination protection for people based on sexual orientation. "You can hold my feet to the fire on this, I will definitely speak in favor of these protections," said the Bishop in a VFP phone interview.

In fact, it has been the policy of the National Episcopal Church that people be free from discrimination based on sexual orientation, since 1976."

VFP thanks the LV GLBT Episcopal organization Integrity for working with the Bishop on this important issue.

GAY MEN'S CHORUS CONCERT

Lehigh Valley Gay Men's Chorus will present "North and South Together," on Saturday June 23, at the Wesley United Methodist Church, 2540 N. Center St., Bethlehem, PA. The Hampton Roads Men's Chorus will be performing as special guests. The concert begins at 8 pm. A silent auction, with proceeds to the LVGMC's operating fund, will be held throughout the evening. Donation: \$12 adults and \$6 for students / seniors. Purchase tickets at the Pride Festival or call 610-366-3320.



PRIMARY ELECTION RESULTS



Seven of the eight candidates endorsed by PA-GALA won their primary races and will go on to the general election race in the fall. PA-GALA chooses to endorse only those candidates who support GLBT issues, or in cases where both candidates show support, PA-GALA endorses the candidate based on the level and duration of commitment to equal rights. Since the primary election is a race within parties, PA-GALA may actually endorse a Democrat and a Republican running for the same office, as the best choice within their party.

The Primary Winners endorsed by PA-GALA are:
Matt Croslis- Dem. Nominee, Lehigh County Executive
Jane Ervin- Rep. Nominee, Lehigh County Executive
Dan McCarthy- Dem. Nominee, Lehigh Cnty Commiss.
Roy Afflerbach- Dem Nominee, Allentown Mayor
Gail Hoover- Dem Nominee, Allentown City Council
Julio Gurdy- Dem Nominee, Allentown City Council
Joe Brennan- Dem Nominee, Northampton Cnty Council

READ ABOUT THE NEW VALLEY-WIDE GLBT YOUTH GROUP ON PAGE 2

PFLAG PICNIC

The 4th annual PFLAG picnic will be held at Ilse and Allan's house on July 8, beginning at 3 pm. Bring a potluck dish or dessert. All are welcome, bring family and friends, and a blanket or lawn chair. For directions email <zinnies@fast.net> or call 610-868-2153.



Valley Free Press does not discriminate on the bases listed in the anti-discrimination statement on page 8, and asks that organizations requesting VFP to publish information maintain a similar policy.

COMING OUT TO YOUR KIDS

I came out to my 5-year-old daughter the other day. She took it well, all things considered.

I was very nervous, actually, and not quite prepared for the discussion. I was hoping when I started seeing someone special that she and my 3-year-old son would just absorb the information by osmosis. I surround my family with diversity and I use the words "lesbian" and "gay" in context but I'd never actually said the words "I'm a lesbian" to her so she would know, without a doubt, what that meant. I was ok with that. I figured I'd go into it more when it would directly affect her world.

So there we all were, cruising around in blissful ignorance and denial, and then she asked me why people get married. We were literally cruising, actually. We were in the car. So I see her expression, except for brief glances in the rearview mirror. I took a deep breath. And I decided to answer that question. And only that question. So I said something like, "Well, sometimes people love each other so much that they want to be a family together and so they decide to get married."

Pretty general and inclusive, I thought, and patted myself on the back. And I was wishing for the simpler times when you could say, "When a man and woman love each other and want to make a baby, then they get married." Then I came to my senses, thank goodness. And I realized I was being homophobic and I couldn't just leave this topic without telling her the truth. The complete truth. So I asked her if she knew who could make a family together and she, much to my chagrin, promptly said that it would be a boy and a girl. I told her that two women could make a family and two men could make a family. I also told her that they weren't allowed to marry but that they could have a special ceremony to celebrate their love with family and friends. After a quick check in the mirror I could see that she was still with me. So I asked her if she knew what it was called when one woman loves another in a way that makes a family. She said she didn't. I said, "They are called Lesbians." My heart started to pound and I took two deep breaths and said, "Did you know that I am a lesbian?" She said "Oh." I waited a few moments and then asked, rather inanely, "Is that ok with you?" She said "Yup."

I know that being a lesbian is not just about wanting to be with another woman sexually, but it is also a crucial part of my identity. I am a lesbian, even if I'm not in a relationship. I am a woman who loves other women. I need to share this with my children or else I run the risk of teaching them the very homophobic and narrow-minded behaviors that oppress us everyday. It's not just about walking the walk. It's also about talking the talk.

VALLEY WIDE GLBT YOUTH GROUP GETS THE GREEN LIGHT

A new GLBT youth group is being formed and will begin meeting at the UUCLV in the fall. The group will provide a safe, supportive environment for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender teens and their friends to meet weekly and participate in social activities including dances, movie nights, plays, and community marches and pride festivals. This group will serve a great need in the community because other local GLBT youth groups do not include social activities or are only for students in a specific school.

This new GLBT youth group will be run by the Welcoming Congregation Committee of the UUCLV with Tracy Denton and Ilse Stoll Zinnes serving as Program Directors. Meetings and events will be facilitated by adult volunteers who will complete a screening process and attend periodic training sessions. Tracy Denton says,

RAGS TO RICHES TAKE THE FIRST STEP

by Denise McKelvey

Dear Denise, I'd like to invest in a way that supports the GLBT community and with concern for other social issues. How do I do it? **Signed, Doing The Right Thing**

Dear DTRT, When investing from a socially conscious point of view, you must take several things into consideration. What are your major concerns? What companies and funds match your values? Will these investments help you meet your financial goals?

The internet has made it easier to find information about socially conscious investments. For instance, the Social Investment Forum (www.socialinvest.org), a Washington-based nonprofit group, provides information on mutual funds that screen out investments in certain types of companies.

Click on "Mutual Fund Screens Chart," at the Social Investment Forum's home page and you'll flip to a page that lists screened funds by investment category -- domestic and international stocks, bonds or balanced funds. Next to each fund listing, the chart notes which of seven common social "screens" (environment, labor/employment, product/services, defense/weapons, "sins," animal testing and human rights/equality issues) that fund uses. It also shows minimum investments and toll-free phone numbers for each fund. The chart doesn't provide enough detail on the funds' philosophies for one-stop-shopping, but it does give investors the opportunity to do some research and maneuver to other sites for more information.

The Meyers Pride Value Fund is a no-load mid-cap value fund concerned with GLBT issues. But you must decide if you need a no-load mid-cap value fund in your portfolio.

Socially conscious investors have long had several choices in mutual funds, but few by major fund companies. That changed last year when Vanguard Calvert Social Index Fund, TIAA-CREF Social Equity Fund and Friends Ivory Social Awareness Fund became available.

There are good socially conscious investments out there, but you must decide what type of investments you need and how socially conscious you want to be. My opinion is that rate of return should not be the only criteria for choosing a fund or removing it from your portfolio. It is wise to diversify. Value, Utilities, Technology, Financial, and Health Care funds may all be favorable in your overall portfolio and long term strategy.

Denise McKelvey is a local personal financial advisor. Information in this article is one person's opinion and may not be appropriate for your financial situation.

"Working with Ilse, The Welcoming Congregation Committee and the UUCLV board has been an encouraging and positive experience. I applaud the UUCLV for taking this important step to support a part of the community that desperately needs it."

Although the group will meet at the UUCLV, participants do not have to be members of the UUCLV or any church. The group is open to all GLBT youth and their friends and is not religious in nature.

Adults over the age of 25 interested in volunteering should contact Tracy Denton at welshdenton@rcn.com or Ilse Stoll Zinnes at zinnes@fast.net or call 610-797-6534. Funding for this group will come from grants, organizations, fundraisers and donations. If you wish to make a donation, mail a check made out to UUCLV, with a notation earmarking it for the GLBT Youth Group, to UUCLV, 424 Center St., Bethlehem PA 18018.

PRIDE REMINDER

This year's Pride King is "Renegade," and the Pride Queen is "Kitty Mame Deitrich." The emcees are: Joe McLaine of WMU's Eargasm on the Main Stage and Chantell on the Cabaret Stage.

GAY MEN OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY

Schedule:

June 23rd: No regular meeting so the membership can support and attend the concert by the LV Gay Men's Chorus.

Although the GMLV regularly meets every 2nd and 4th Saturday at 7 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church, the group will be on hiatus during the months of July and August and will resume regular meeting times in September.

For further information on GMLV see "inset page A."

DIAMONZ FOR PRIDE

Friday evening, June 22nd, Diamonz will host an oldies night dance as a benefit for Pride.

AS IF PRODUCTIONS NEXT PROJECT IS: P.W.A. PEOPLE WITH AIDS.

If you have a photo of a loved one you would like included in a video montage at the beginning or end of the documentary that As If is producing about people with AIDS, please contact us at 610-434-78j45 or at asifproductions@juno.com.

WOMEN'S SOFTBALL

Women's Softball games have begun every Tuesday & Thursday. Interested in playing or watching the league? Contact Diamonz (610-865-1028) for game times and locations.

B&N GLBT BOOK CLUB

The Barnes & Noble GLBT Bookclub will be discussing the book "An American in Paris" by Margaret Vandenburg, at 7:00 PM on June 19 in the Cafe. On July 17, come join the discussion of the book, "The Pink Triangle" by Richard Plant. Discussions are always lively and participants get free beverages so come join the club!

BINGO FOR FACT

Every Wednesday evening in July Diamonz will host Bingo Night. All proceeds will go to FACT, (Fighting AIDS Continuously Together).

HIGH SCHOOL E-PAPER

Five Allen High School students have begun to publish an e-newspaper called "Lehigh Valley Gay News." The first issue was about the Minisi Trails Boy Scout Council's new "don't ask, don't tell" policy for gay scouts and gay adult leaders. The issue had several sections of information including the actual written policy from the Council.

The youth publishing this e-paper, continue to remain fairly anonymous. VFP praises their effort and encourages this group to continue to pursue issues of interest to the GLBT youth community.

UNITARIANS, PFLAG AND HOME DEPOT

The National Unitarian Universalist Association pushed Home Depot's envelop last month when news of Home Depot's decision to refrain from adding the words sexual orientation to its non-discrimination policy was made public. In response the UUC Association alerted Home Depot to a shareholder proposal asking the company to amend its non-discrimination policy, which the company did.

After Home Depot put the new policy into effect, PFLAG's national organization and Home Depot joined in a project to celebrate Father's Day and honor love and tolerance by rewarding \$100 contributions to PFLAG with a special Home Depot, Father's Day gift certificate to the donor's designated Dad.

Though there has been some anti-gay backlash, the story is a testament to UUC, PFLAG and the individuals within those organizations and at Home Depot who recognize that positive change requires action.

THEATRE OUTLET

Theatre Outlet has two events occurring Pride Fest Weekend, the play "The Lonesome West," and the exhibition in the Art Lobby: "Some of them Old, Some of them New, Some of them Borrowed, One of them Blue," a show of lights and masks by Annie Giancarlo.

The Theatre Outlet also graciously hosted the Pride Film Festival Multi Feature Film Night last Wednesday Night.

NEW PA-GALA MEMBER

The ever extending list of PA-GALA members now includes the Lehigh County Democratic Committee.

UUCLV SERVICES

June 17- 10:30 am

Spiritual Healing Service - Charles and Kathleen Higgins

June 24- 10:30 am

"Jesus, Our Jesus" - Boden Platt Day
See further information on UUCLV on inset page A.

AS IF... THANKS

As if Productions board members say thank you to Lenora, Terry Courtney, and the very talented performers who donated their time for, "The mother of all drag shows" at Diamonz. The fundraiser for AS IF Productions took in over \$700, with a portion going to AIDS Outreach, and FACT. (Steve is still finding dollar bills tucked in places he had long forgotten existed). These shows are proving to be FUN and Exciting. Don't miss the next one.

GLOSS SCHEDULE

Volleyball: Tuesdays in the Lehigh Parkway, Allentown, and Thursdays in Catasauqua at 6:30 pm.

Tennis: Sundays at 3 pm at the Lehigh University courts in Saucon Valley.

Racquetball: Tuesdays at 8 pm and Saturdays at 9 pm at the Allentown Racquet Club.

GLOSS, the Gay and Lesbian Outdoor Sports Society, has ended it's website contract due to rate hikes. The website has been a valuable tool in attracting new members and providing information. In order to reestablish the website, GLOSS is looking for either a web hosting service that charges a nominal fee, or a person or organization willing to sponsor the site. If you can help, contact GLOSS at fabio@early.com.

FACT FAMILY PICNIC

Keep July 29 open for the FACT Family Picnic at South Mt. Grove. Check the FACT website at FACTLV.org for details.

FACT BOWLING TOURNAMENT

Don't miss this important and fun fund raising event on Sunday, July 21, at 1:00 pm. The FACT (Fighting AIDS Continuously Together) Tournament will be held at the Rose Bowl Lanes, 15th and Sumner Streets in Allentown. \$10 per person. five bowlers per team. Prizes Awarded, three games per team. Walk-ins accepted. Equipment supplied. No average required. *Accepting sponsorship. If you or your group would like to enter, contact FACT, for an entry form: 610-820-5519.

CALENDAR

ACCO - A Chorus Celebrating Women, Rehearsals, Thursdays 7-10pm at UUCLV Bethlehem, 610.760.1759

AIDS Outreach - 112 N. 5th St. Allentown, PA 610.435.8424

AIDSWALK - AIDSWALK Lehigh Valley - 610.974.8701 www.regiononline.com/lvaids

ASC - AIDS Service Center 610.974.8701

As If Productions - Documentary Film Makers

BEARS - Lehigh Valley Bears Club, meets at Stonewall, 1st Sat.-monthly, 8pm. <lvbearclub@hotmail.com> 610-767-3433, PO Box 1396, Allentown PA 18105-1396

BMA - Bucks/Montgomery Alliance for Gay and Lesbian Concerns 215-529-0360

B&N - Barnes and Noble Gay & Lesbian Book Club, White Hall store, Monthly, 7:00pm.

Bowling - Thursday Nights, 8:00 pm, Parkway Lanes, 610-691-8303

CIVIC and 19th St. Theatre, 527 N 19th St, 610-432-8943, <civictheater.com>

Enigma Players - 610-432-0706

EQUAL! at Agere 610.712.5532

FACT - Fighting AIDS Continuously Together 610.820.5519

GLEE - gay and lesbian empowered employees at Air Products

GLASS - at Lehigh Univ. 610.758.3469

GLISN - at Dun & Bradstreet, <vagrantlyollow.com/GLISN/>

GLORA - Gay and Lesbian Organization of Reading and Allentown (Social gatherings, various dates) Newsletter- The Tassle. Write to: P.O. Box 1952, Allentown PA 18105-1952, email- GLORAIIPA@AOL.COM

GLOSS - Gay and Lesbian Organized Sports Society, P.O. Box 21862 Lehigh Valley, PA 18002 Volleyball, Tennis, Racquet Ball 610.434.2966.

GMLV - Gay Men of the Lehigh Valley, 2nd and 4th Saturday Monthly 7pm UUCLV, Bethlehem, 610.954.7775

HMFF - Hope Ministry Family Fellowship, Sundays, 11am, Open Space Gallery, 931 Hamilton St., 610-791-0716

Integrity - Lesbian & Gay Episcopalians 1st Monday monthly 7pm Trinity Episcopal Church 2nd Floor Chapel, 44 E. Market Street Bethlehem. 610-758-8642

KS - Kindred Spirits- Support, discussion, and social group for lesbians and bisexual women Fridays at UUCLV, 6:30pm, Contact: Chris at 610-868-0248 or Donna at 610-998-0607

Liberty High School - Mission Equality :Gay /Straight Alliance

LVGMC - Lehigh Valley Gay Men's Chorus, Rehearsals Tuesdays, Wesley Un. Meth Church, Beth. 610.366.3320, lvgmc@hotmail.com

MCC - Metropolitan Community Church LV, 424 Center St. (UUCLV), Bethlehem, 6 pm Sundays, 610.954.7775

NCC - Northampton Community College Gay Lesbian and Bisexual Student Union, Meetings every Monday from 4pm to 6pm at CC114 (Cohen Lounge), College Center call 610.861.5541 (#1386) or 882-2531

19th St/Civic Theatre - 610-432-8943

Out There - Students at Cedar Crest College

PA-GALA - PA Gay and Lesbian Alliance for Political Action, (Voter's Information Booklet, and Political Lobbying) to become a member send \$20 to: PA-GALA, P.O. Box 20825 Lehigh Valley 18002 (610.432.5449)

PFLAG - LV Parents Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, 2nd Sundays 3pm at NCC, College Center Rm 134 610.967.5219

Pride - LV Pride (Pride Festival) 610.770.6200, email: <lvpride@hotmail.com>, <www.prideorg.org>

JUNE 2001 GLBT PRIDE MONTH

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
PRIDE COLLEGE MOVIE WEEK ↗						1 Diamond for Pride KS
3 MCC WDIY UUCLV HMFF	4 MOVIE AT MUHLENBERG	5 MOVIE AT LEHIGH or LAFAYETTE	6 MOVIE AT CEDAR CREST	7 MOVIE AT MORAVIAN	8 MOVIE AT NCC	9 GMLV GLORA Potluck GLOSS
10 MCC WORKSHOP HMFF WDIY	11 RAA ENIGMA PLAYERS	12	13 PRIDE Film Fest Night	14 RAA Bowling GLOSS ACCO Stonewall for Pride	15 KS PRE- Pride Parties	16 PRIDE Parade & Festival
17 MCC Pride WDIY Service HMFF UUCLV	18 RAA	19 GLOSS LVGMC	20	21 Bowling ACCO GLOSS RAA	22 KS	23 WDIY LV Gay Men's Chorus Concert
24 MCC WDIY HMFF UUCLV	25 RAA	26 LVGMC GLOSS	27	28 Bowling ACCO GLOSS RAA	29 KS	30 GMLV WDIY GLOSS

PRIDE WEEK- WATCH FOR ADDITIONAL EVENTS

JULY 2001

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 MCC WDIY HMFF UUCLV	2 RAA	3 LVGMC GLOSS	4	5 RAA GLOSS Bowling	6 KS	7 WDIY GLOSS BEARS GLORA Potluck
8 MCC PFLAG WDIY HMFF UUCLV	9 RAA	10 GLOSS LVGMC B&N BOOK CLUB	11 Reading PFLAG	12 ACCO Bowling RAA GLOSS	13 KS	14 GMLV WDIY GLOSS
15 MCC WDIY UUCLV HMFF	16 RAA	17 GLOSS LVGMC	18	19 Bowling RAA GLOSS ACCO	20 KS	21 FACT Bowling WDIY GLOSS GMLV
22 MCC WDIY HMFF UUCLV	23 RAA	24 GLOSS LVGMC	25	26 Bowling ACCO GLOSS RAA	27 KS	28 GMLV WDIY GLOSS
29 MCC WDIY HMFF UUCLV	30 FACT PICNIC RAA	31 LVGMC GLOSS				

**DUE TO SERIOUS HORRIBLE
COMPUTER PROBLEMS DURING
ALL OF PRIDE WEEK
WE WERE UNABLE TO PROOFREAD THIS
ISSUE OR CORRECT THE CALENDAR.
PLEASE BEAR WITH US.**

BY VOLUNTEERS WHO DEDICATE THEIR TIME TO OUR COMMUNITY. CELEBRATES THESE WONDERFUL SOURCES OF LOCAL PRIDE

ACCO

ACCO, A Chorus Celebrating Women, has been bringing women's music to the Lehigh Valley community for over seven years. The mission of this (501c3) organization is to educate the entire community about the enormous and often forgotten contribution women have made to the world of music and song throughout history and across all cultures.

Under the leadership of musical director Beverly Morgan, ACCO has performed: with the Anna Cruses Chorus in Philadelphia, at Musikfest, as part of the First Night celebration in Bethlehem, with internationally known composers, including Gayle Barnwell of Sweet Honey in the Rock. ACCO has participated in educational programs with hundreds of children's groups, and has commissioned and performed works composed for the ACCO chorus.

If you are a woman interested in auditioning to be part of the ACCO Chorus, or if you are interested in helping ACCO with behind the scenes work call the number below.

ACCO, is seeking applications for interim director for the 2001-02 season. Women who are interested should contact Fern Bradley at

GAY MEN OF THE LV

"Gay Men of the Lehigh Valley is a social group of gay men that strives to create a safe, healthy and caring environment to develop friendships, to provide support and understanding for each other's lives and to learn more about our community."

GMLV meets every 2nd and 4th Saturday at 7 pm at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 24 Center St., Bethlehem, unless otherwise noted. (There will be no meetings in July or August, but regular meeting times will resume in September.) Refreshments are served at each meeting. A one dollar donation is requested at each meeting. GMLV is self-operated and maintained. It depends on the participation of each of its members to function. If you would like to give your time or financial support please speak with director, Joe Canto or email at gaymenlv@hotmail.com.

MCCLV

MCCLV began in the Lehigh Valley in 1984. Its mission is to be a Christ-centered, community church sharing God's love and grace with all people through worship, fellowship and service. MCC welcomes ALL people and offers an affirming outreach to the Lehigh Valley gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community.

Worship Service is every Sunday at 5:50 p.m. at 424 Center St., Bethlehem. Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley is a member congregation of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC), which was founded in 1968. UFMCC has grown into a denomination of approximately 300 churches in 18 countries around the globe. Worldwide membership surpassed 32,000 in the mid-1990s.

To contact MCCLV : (610) 954-7775, E-mail: <mcc@starplace.com>, Website: <http://mcc.starplace.com>

PFLAG

PFLAG LV, Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays of the Lehigh Valley, was originally formed to help parents deal positively with their gay and lesbian children. PFLAG is a national organization with branches throughout America. It works to promote and protect the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community with a 3 part mission: advocacy, support, and education.

The Lehigh Valley Chapter was started over seven years ago, and meets monthly on 2nd Sundays at 3pm. at NCC in the College Center, Rm134. PFLAGLV has participated in a variety of GLBT supportive and educational events. To contact Lehigh Valley PFLAG, call 610-967-5219.

AS IF PRODUCTIONS

Mission: To promote awareness and tolerance of under represented populations through the use of film, video, and the media.

AS IF Productions is a not for profit organization started by local activists, and to date has produced three documentary style films about GLBT issues. AS IF is currently working on several new projects including a film about People With AIDS. To find out more about AS IF Productions visit the AS IF booth at the Pride Festival.

LVGMC

The Lehigh Valley Gay Men's Chorus began in 1994 and has been giving sweet and strong ever since. This (501c3) group has performed with Diva Marilyn Horn, won "Best Musical Group" at the Philadelphia Pride Parade and has performed numerous concerts in and outside the Lehigh Valley.

Part of LVGMC's mission statement includes: "Our mission is not only to entertain, but to be a supportive environment for gays and lesbians and be a conduit to initiate discussion and understanding."

The chorus is open to all persons, tenor or bass voiced, who are gay or lesbian or who are respectful of gay and lesbian issues. LVGMC also welcomes the participation of non-singing volunteers to help with the production of events. To contact LVGMC call 610-366-3320 or email <steveo@early.com>.

**FOR ADDITIONAL
GROUPS SEE THE
BACK OF THIS PAGE**

F.A.C.T. FIGHTING AIDS CONTINUOUSLY TOGETHER

FACT, Fighting AIDS Continuously Together, a volunteer run (501c3) organization dedicated to supporting the Lehigh Valley HIV/AIDS community. FACT raises money to distribute to local agencies and individuals who deal daily with the AIDS epidemic. This year, FACT will organize and present the 16th Annual FACT Summer Games at Rainbow MT. FACT's other events include the annual Snow Ball in December, the Summer Solstice, and other events throughout the year. FACT was honored by the City of Allentown as a recipient of the 1999 Human Relations Award.

Besides the support FACT provides to those affected and effected by HIV/AIDS, FACT volunteers want the community to remember that the epidemic is not over. To become a member, volunteer, or contributor to FACT, or to get further information contact the FACT Hotline at 610-820-5519.

MAKE FRIENDS, SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY, MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

PRIDE OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY

Pride of the Lehigh Valley was formed in 1993 by a small group of concerned Lehigh Valley citizens, who were inspired after attending a Washington D.C. civil rights march. The motivation behind starting this group was to provide a much-needed positive and welcoming space for local gays and lesbians. Their initial goal was to hold a "Pride Festival" with the hopes of increasing tolerance and acceptance of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) people everywhere.

Since its formation, Pride of the Lehigh Valley has held seven annual Pride Festivals, two annual Pride Parades, and an annual film festival. It has hosted dances, concerts, photo exhibits, plays as well as many other educational and cultural events ALL show casing and celebrating the talents of GLBT people both in the Lehigh Valley area and beyond.

Pride of LV also serves the community in many other capacities. It functions as a valuable resource to the community by providing a safe space for GLBT people to learn about GLBT-friendly organizations and businesses -- through their annual printed "Pride Guide", their web site and email announcements, at the festival itself, as well as at other events.

Pride of LV's mission is the advancement of GLBT rights and pride through community outreach, to be achieved through events and activities aimed at:

1. Raising community awareness and understanding by increasing the positive visibility of GLBT people throughout the Lehigh Valley.
2. Celebrating the contributions of GLBT persons in art, music, literature, film, religion, education, history, family life, sports and community activities.
3. Promoting community resources available to GLBT people in the Lehigh Valley
4. Celebrating the diversity and encouraging unity within the GLBT community.
5. Creating a positive atmosphere in which people will be encouraged to "come out" so each person may realize their full potential as a GLBT person.

LV BEARS CLUB

The Lehigh Valley Bears are a social club for hairy men and their admirers. Meetings are the first Saturday of the month at 8 pm at the Stonewall Bar in Allentown, upstairs in the Moose Lounge under the moose. For more information you can contact Mike at <Mtnbear@fast.net>, or phone (610)814-6916.

Upcoming events:

- 6/16 Table at Pridefest 12 noon - 6 pm
- 6/16 Gamenight
- 6/23 Lehigh Valley Gay Men's Chorus 8 pm
- 7/7 Monthly Gathering at the Moose Lounge 8 pm
- 7/21 A day at Dorney Park
- 8/4 Monthly Gathering at the Moose Lounge 8 pm
- Bear Run Weekend in Harrisburg, PA
- 8/18 BearBBQ

THE TRULY INDEPENDENT FILM FESTIVAL

Did The Mummy leave you feeling a little stiff? Did you think Pearl Harbor was a bomb? Was the best part of Moulin Rouge the Lady Marmalade remake? Unsatisfied with Hollywood's recent deluge of shrek...uh dreck? As If Productions announces The Truly Independent Film Festival. With pizes and everything! How to enter:

1. Grab a camera and make a movie that has a 10 minute or less running time.
 2. Enter it in The Truly Independent Film Festival by sending a copy in care of As If Productions 120 N. 12th st., Allentown 18102.
 3. Sit back and wait to become famous.
- The T.I.F.F. will be held during October to coincide with National Coming Out Day. More details to follow in the next issue of the Valley Free Press.

MCC EVENTS

June 17, 5:50 pm: MCCLV Pride Service

The MCCLV church office will be closed July 2-7 due to the pastor's attendance at the UFMCC General conference in Toronto.

Sunday, July 15: 3pm -5pm: The Great Commission & MCCLV Workshop - Facilitated by Rev. Goudy, this workshop will discuss the four different versions of the Great Commission found in the Gospels. Phone: 610-954-7775 or e-mail <mcclehighvalley@yahoo.com> you are interested in attending.

Saturday, July 21: Social Justice Team Workshop

Sunday, July 22: 1 pm - 4 pm: Membership Class

If you speak a language other than english, the Worship Team wants you during the Pentecost season! Please see Worship Team Leader Anthony call or email the church office for details.

FAMILY NOTES

Jeanette and Pat in New Jersey report that the pending adoption of a baby girl from Guatemala is about 4-5 months, has made the older supportive generation of their family into "SUPER GRANDPARENTS."

Jeanette's mother, father and aunt (all in their 70s) took them out to buy a crib and some other baby stuff. To every salesman they encountered, Jeanette's Mom exclaimed, "they're going to have a baby!" Of course it took the salesperson a few minutes to register that the soon to be parents were two women. Once that was clear, jubilant congratulations were passed around with genuine sincerity. One thing has become increasingly apparent to Pat and Jeanette. A child changes everything for everybody in every way. Stay tuned.

TRANSGENDER CONFERENCE

The United Methodist Affirmation Council attended a RMN Transgender community Outreach Event conducted with the Minneapolis transgendered community last Friday night in Minneapolis. Jim Palmquist, Vice President of LV-PFLAG attended the Affirmation Council meetings. The event included an informal reception, introductions, a keynote speech, a musical concert and a transgender panel discussion.



THE LEHIGH VALLEY PRIDE FESTIVAL

NEWS BITES

Many mainstream media outlets covered a recent study by Dr. Robert Spitzer which seemed to indicate that gay men and lesbians with a sincere desire to change their sexual orientation could do so. However, much of the data was refuted by scientists who quickly showed that the subject group was drawn in many cases from ex-gay ministry programs and was very small. The finding also showed that even within this highly motivated group, less than half of the subjects were able to "change."

Canada's, "national post today" shows: 55% support equal marriage for same sex couples nationally. Among 18-29 year olds the support is 73%.

Last month the US Census Bureau released statistics that indicated there is a significant rise in unmarried couples nation wide. Allentown shows a higher increase than the national average. Analysts and journalists seem to be stumped by this unexpected increase. GLBT activists have tried to point out that this latest census allowed same-sex couples to be counted for the first time.

At Work: A total of 86 percent of AT&T's shareholders voted against removing sexual orientation from the company's written non-discrimination policy.

Memorial to Gay Veterans: For the first time in US history, gay veterans will be recognized with a war memorial in Desert Memorial Park in Cathedral City, California.

BSA Policy=Suicide: The 1,600 member Rhode Island Medical Society adopted a resolution last week saying that discrimination like the Boy Scouts of America's policy of excluding gays contributes to the higher rate of suicide among homosexual youth.

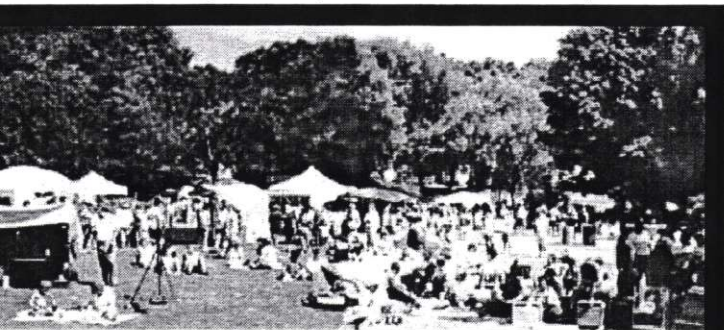
A new Gallup poll on American attitudes toward homosexuality shows public support continues to build for equal opportunity in the workplace and recognition of relationships. Of the Americans polled, 85 percent support equal opportunity in the workplace, 54 percent think homosexual relations between consenting adults should be legal, while 52 percent believe homosexuality is an acceptable "alternative lifestyle." Further, 44 percent favor allowing gay and lesbian couples to form civil unions and receive some legal rights of married couples.

Hawaii will soon become the 26th state to include sexual orientation in a state hate crimes law.

An anti-gay "Defense of marriage Act" has failed on the Louisiana Senate floor. If the bill had passed it could have prohibited the state from recognizing civil unions or domestic partnerships formed in other states.

In April the Arizona legislature approved a repeal of the state's cohabitation, sodomy and non-procreational sex act law. The Bill was sponsored by openly gay State Representative Steve May.

The Communications Workers Union (AT&T, Lucent, Agere) has decided to stop their support of the Boy Scouts of America. They are also urging their members to stop being involved. (From LV-PFLAG Newsletter)



FROM THE STAGE IN 1995

WORLD PREMIER OF VIDEO

This new video that confronts ignorance and homophobia in the church documents the stories of local activist Roberta Kreider (member of Lehigh Valley PFLAG) and Mary Lou Wallner, from devastation to empowerment when confronted with the myriad of issues that resulted from the deaths of their gay and lesbian family members. Both women are from religious backgrounds that condemn homosexuality as a sin, and both tried unsuccessfully to reconcile their loved ones' homosexuality with the judgmental religion of their childhood.

They are both now active in a faith which promotes acceptance and understanding of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals. The screening will be held at The Center for Sexuality and Religion, 987 Old Eagle School Road - Suite 719, Wayne, PA on June 17 at 5:30 pm. RSVP to Helen Heineman at <hheinem@remed.com>.

The video can be purchased for \$29.95 along with a study guide. To order call (610) 989-0198. Profits will be used to fund new ventures that promote equality for God's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender children. Funding and support were provided for this video by Central Baptist Church in Wayne, PA, the Concerned mission group, and many individuals within the congregation.

RIVER TRIP

GLOSS announces that the Gay Activist Alliance in Morris County will be cosponsoring this year's Summer Tubing Trip down the Delaware River with Sundance Outdoor Adventure Society of NYC. This event is open to everyone.

The trip lasts between 3-4 hours, the river runs gently at an average speed of 1 mph with a depth of 1-5 feet. The event is Saturday, August 4. Cost is \$14 per person plus a parking charge of \$3. Fee includes tubes and bus drop off. Only cash is accepted. For direction and more information about Bucks Country River Country, please call (215) 297-8823 or see <www.rivercountry.net>.

READING PFLAG

Reading PFLAG will host the 10:30am service at the UUC Church of Reading on June 24, 2001. Roberta Kreider, PFLAG member and editor of a book of faith stories of GLBT people will conduct the service. PFLAG will be "in charge" of the service and will present the hospitality time after the service. For information 610-488-7533 or 610-670-8029.

MOST LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THIS PAPER ARE RU VFP THANKS THEM FOR THEIR TIRELESS EFFORTS, AND

GLOSS

GLOSS, The Lehigh Valley Gay and Lesbian Organized Sports Society is an all volunteer group that offers you a variety of sports and activities. GLOSS was started in 1991 as a volleyball group known as The Velvet Spikers. Tennis and racquetball were added later.

In the summer, racquetball, tennis and volleyball take place on a weekly basis. Anyone interested in joining in, is encouraged to attend regardless of their level of ability. In addition to the sporting activities, members get together to play board games on a monthly basis during the fall, winter and spring. The important thing is to enjoy the company of other GLBT people and have fun.

To join GLOSS, call the hotline at 610-434-2966 or email: fabio@early.com. To lead a new sport, contact GLOSS.

KINDRED SPIRITS

Kindred Spirits is a support, discussion, and social group for lesbian and bisexual women. The group meets weekly on Friday evenings at 6:30 pm in a variety of locations. If you are interested in joining them, call to check location and time- 610-997-0607.

LESBIAN MOMS AND GAY DADS

This informal group meets approximately four times a year at each other's homes. Usually a pot luck meal together enjoyed while the children have fun playing with other children who have similar families. Stories and accomplishments are shared. Discussions revolve around child rearing, activities, how to get pregnant, resources, school issues, second parent adoption, and children. Activities have included: egg hunts, swimming, train rides, and tractor rides. A trip to an amusement park may be in the near future. Families come from all over the tri-state area. For more information about this group call (610) 262-2519.

RENAISSANCE

Renaissance is an educational (501c3) and support organization for people in the transgender community. To get more information or to find out about the organization's local monthly meetings, write about VFP or to join PA-GALA, stop by the 610-821-2955, or email renlv@ren.org.

GLORA

GLORA, The Gay and Lesbian Organization of Allentown and Reading, is a social group for GLBT men and women, which started in 1989. The group is dedicated to organizing fun and healthy social events, like potluck suppers, movie nights, hikes, bowling, mini-golf and other events suggested by members. There are usually at least two events each month and these are usually attended by 15 to 20 people (especially the potlucks). GLORA membership now exceeds 100, and includes people from all over the Lehigh Valley and Reading areas. Many events are family oriented and include kids. To find out more about GLORA, write to P.O. Box 1952, Allentown, PA 18105-1952, or email GLORAINPA@aol.com.

EQUAL! GLEE, AND GLISN

There are several organizations within major Lehigh Valley corporations that promote and support the equal rights of their GLBT employees and that support the Lehigh Valley GLBT community at large. Among them are EQUAL! at AGERE, GLEE (Gay and Lesbian Empowered Employees) at Air Products, and GLISN at Dun and Bradstreet. See contact information for these groups on page 5.

INTEGRITY

Integrity is an organization for GLBT Episcopalians (Anglicans) and their friends and meets the first Monday of each month in the upstairs chapel of Trinity Episcopal Church (44 East Market Street--Bethlehem) at 7:00 pm. There is a celebration of the Holy Eucharist with discussion around scripture as it relates to gay Christians. For more information (or directions) call Dixie at 610-758-8642 or Scott at 610-691-8303.

VFP

The Valley Free Press is a not for profit newspaper dedicated to bringing information to the LV GLBT community. It has no advertising and is privately funded by the publisher. Each month 1000 issues are printed and distributed to people via direct mail (to about 350) and at LV distribution points. The papers are free. PA-GALA members get a subscription to VFP as a membership premium. For information about VFP or to join PA-GALA, stop by the PA-GALA booth at the festival.

PA-GALA IS

PA-GALA, The Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Alliance for Political Action, is the largest gay and lesbian voter information and lobbying group in the state. With nearly 1000 paid members and a comprehensive mailing list of nearly 40,000 people statewide, including 3500 in the greater Lehigh Valley. The Lehigh Valley Branch is the strongest branch of the organization.

Amazingly, PA-GALA, does it all on a budget built from \$20 memberships a small Rainbow Team contributions, few excess of \$50. PA-GALA can receive grants or corporate funding because it is lobbying organization.

When the Hate Crimes Bill begins to move, PA-GALA is there lobbying for its passage. When the Mayor of Allentown tries to remove civil rights from police and firefighters, PA-GALA is there stopping the action. Whether a candidate runs for local school board or US Senator, PA-GALA is there, finding out if they'll defend your rights and in some cases, whether they've lied about their support. PA-GALA gets the information to voters in the GLBT community through direct mail of a candidate guide "Gay and Lesbian Vote."

PA-GALA is the only organization lobbying for GLBT rights in the Lehigh Valley and the only one that mails you the voter information you need. To become a PA-GALA member see page 8 of this paper. Lehigh Valley members of PA-GALA receive a subscription to this newspaper. You can join now at this festival, at the PA-GALA booth.

UUCLV

The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lehigh Valley has a 100+ year history of tolerance of diversity. UUCLV, which has just officially become a "Welcoming Congregation" (to GLBT people) has a long history as a place where the GLBT community is welcome. Many local groups mentioned in this paper meet in the UUCLV Church at 424 Center St. in Bethlehem.

UUCLV is also well known for its activism in pro-environment, pro-civil rights and multicultural causes. Those who seek a spiritual environment that may or may not be grounded in traditional religion, but encourages exploration and a quest for understanding, may find UUCLV the perfect spiritual home. To contact UUCLV call: 610-866-7652.

GET INVOLVED, JOIN, CARE, VOTE, CONTRIBUTE, VOLUNTEER, ENJOY

SPECIAL EVENTS

BINGO AT DIAMONZ - SUNDAYS
RAINBOW BOWLING - THURSDAYS
KINDRED SPIRITS - FRIDAYS
LV BEARS -
FIRST SATURDAY EACH MONTH
GLOSS VOLLEYBALL -
TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS
GLOSS TENNIS - SUNDAYS
GLOSS RACQUETBALL -
TUESDAYS & SATURDAYS
8TH ANNUAL LV PRIDE FESTIVAL -
JUNE 16
POST-PRIDE PARTIES D & S - JUNE 16
MCC PRIDE SERVICE - JUNE 17
ROBERTA KRIEDER'S
VIDEO PREMIER - JUNE 17
B & N GLBT BOOKCLUB - JUNE 19
DIAMONZ FOR PRIDE
OLDIES NIGHT - JUNE 22
LV GAY MEN'S CHORUS CONCERT
- JUNE 22
READING PFLAG / UUC SERVICE -
JUNE 24
GLISN DOES NYC GAY PRIDE PARADE -
JUNE 24
LV BEARS AT MOOSE JUNGLE - JULY 7
LV-PFLAG PICNIC - JULY 8
MCCLV WORKSHOP - JULY 15
BARNES & NOBLE GLBT
BOOKCLUB - JULY 17
LV BEARS AT DORNEY PARK
- JULY 21
MCCLV SOCIAL
JUSTICE WORKSHOP - JULY 21
BOWLING FOR FACT - JULY 21
MCCLV MEMBERSHIP CLASS - JULY 22
FACT FAMILY PICNIC - JULY 29
GLOSS/GAA/SUNDANCE
RIVER TRIP - AUG 4
LV BEARS - AUG 4
LV BEARS BBQ - AUG 18

BINGO AT DIAMONZ - SUNDAYS
RAINBOW BOWLING - THURSDAYS
KINDRED SPIRITS - FRIDAYS
LY BEARS -

FIRST SATURDAY EACH MONTH
GLOSS VOLLEYBALL -
TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS
GLOSS TENNIS - SUNDAYS
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8TH ANNUAL LV PRIDE FESTIVAL -
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POST-PRIDE PARTIES & S - JUNE 16
MCC PRIDE SERVICE - JUNE 17
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BARNES & NOBLE GLBT
BOOKCLUB - JULY 17
LV BEARS AT DORNEY PARK
JULY 21
MCCLY SOCIAL
JUSTICE WORKSHOP - JULY 21
BOWLING FOR FACT - JULY 21
MCCLY MEMBERSHIP CLASS - JULY 22
FACT FAMILY PICNIC - JULY 22
GLOSS/GAA/SUNDANCE
RIVER TRIP - AUG 4
LV BEARS - AUG 4
LV BEARS BBQ - AUG 18

CIVIL UNION ANNOUNCEMENTS

To announce your Vermont Civil Union or to get information on how to get a Vermont Civil Union (step by step), email Valley Free Press at liztrish@aol.com or phone 610-432-5449.

ALLEN H.S. GSA

Check out the booth at the Pride Festival for Allen High School's new Gay / Straight Alliance - Nexus. This is the first time a local GLBT youth group has been allowed by their sponsoring organization to have a Pride Festival booth.

NYC PARADE TRIP

GLISN is going to march in the NYC Gay Pride Parade in New York City on Sunday, June 24. The GLISN bus will leave at 10:00 am from Bethlehem. A designated meeting place will be assigned to depart NYC by 8:00 pm. Cost to you is \$7.00, plus a tip for the bus driver. 14 seats are available (first come first served) to those in the community interested in attending the parade.

GLISN, the GLBT support group at Dun & Bradstreet is sponsoring this trip. To attend or for more information, email Scot Laubner at laubners@dnb.com.

STEVE BLACK IS PARADE GRAND MARSHALL

Pride has honored Steve Black by choosing him to be the Grand Marshall of the Third Annual Gay Pride Parade.

Steve Black has been a longtime gay political activist in the Lehigh Valley and State-wide community. In the early 1990s he represented this half of the state, within a small gay and lesbian voter organization based in Pittsburgh. Four years ago Steve, with the help of Liz Bradbury, Trish Sullivan, Gail Erich and a few others, formed PA-GALA, the Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Alliance for political action. Steve created the mission statement, wrote the by-laws, and even coined the name, saying, "I want this political group to be known as an Alliance to show we are inclusive of all people dedicated to fighting for GLBT rights."

In just a few years PA-GALA has become the largest GLBT political organization in the state with nearly one thousand paid members, and a mailing list of over 32,000 people. Steve maintains the mailing list himself, organizes mailings to candidates, chooses the issues and races that PA-GALA the candidate guide "Gay and other than those in the Lehigh other political and activist groups all Steve did, it would be a and responsibilities are much covers in elections and compiles Lesbian Vote" for all the counties Valley. He is also the liaison to throughout the state. If that were herculean task but Steve's work further reaching.

Steve is the primary GLBT Harrisburg for passage of the Hate legislation. He has been lobbying nearly a decade. During the week of two days lobbying the State Senate Bill. When this Bill passes (it will be State of PA that recognizes the people), it will be because of the work of Steve Black. Though others have also worked on this Bill, it is Steve who mobilized voters across the State to write, email, call and visit their Representatives in Harrisburg and it is this grassroots lobbying that is the actual catalyst that changes politicians minds. Steve Black is the one who best understands the Harrisburg political dynamics, he is the one we all turn to for a clear picture of what is really happening and how to actually get things done. And remember, though Steve spends at least part of every day working on GLBT rights issues, everything Steve does is as a volunteer.

Last year, the State Democratic Committee finally recognized the significance of GLBT PA voters and agreed to allowing five openly gay or lesbian people to run for delegate to the National Democratic Convention in L.A. The 15th Congressional District (Lehigh Valley) would be allowed, for the first time in history, to have one openly gay delegate. All the person had to do was, get signatures to get on the ballot, run a campaign, and win (and then pay for the trip).

A caucus of Lehigh Valley GLBT political leaders all agreed that Steve would be the one to run. Steve's background in political activism came into play for this campaign. He gathered the most signatures, and in a field of twelve candidates, Steve came in third, behind only the head of the Lehigh County Democratic Committee and a State Senator. Steve is the first openly gay person to win an election in the Lehigh Valley.

Congratulations to Steve Black for this honor, when it comes to GLBT politics in the Lehigh Valley, and in fact, in the State of Pennsylvania, there is no one who deserves it more. If there were five, or maybe just three more people like Steve Black in PA, we'd probably have a Civil Union law in this State!

**HE HAS
BEEN
LOBBYING IN
HARRISBURG
FOR YOUR
RIGHTS FOR
NEARLY
A DECADE**

POINT - COUNTER POINT BY STEPHEN AND JASON

THE QUEERING OF AMERICA?

POINT by Stephen Libby

A 21 year old lesbian asked me, "why do older gays 'freak' when we use the word queer?" She seemed freaked by the freaking adults. I explained that queer, in its original form meant something different, strange or out of the norm. When the labeling of homosexuals began in the late 19th century, queer began to be used to mean those who would rather keep company with members of their own gender.

Queer became the word most dreaded in social circles. To be called queer was to be labeled different. Whether or not it was originally meant to inflict pain, it was not long before it was used to single out those who were, "theatrical, light in their loafers, tom-boyish, artistic," and those are the nice words. Being taunted by the Q-word became very scary.

But in the mid 1980's gay activist groups like ACT-UP and Queer Nation reclaimed the word queer as our own. It may have been to make the straight population uncomfortable, an in-your-face attitude. Using their word to describe ourselves, we were throwing it back in their faces. A word that meant we were different from them, actually empowered us.

**FOR ME THE
WORD QUEER
IS INCLUSIVE
OF US ALL...**

**SAYS
STEPHEN**

**QUEER HAS
A NASTY
RING TO
IT...**

**SAYS
JASON**

Though many GLBT people, find too many negative connotations and memories attached to the word queer, for me it has many positive meanings. I call my friends queer. I identify myself as queer. I have chosen to do so because we need a word to represent all of the sexual minorities, so we can feel united and represented. Some people use the word gay. But I don't feel "gay" includes lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people. Some people use GLBT, but that isn't a word, and even that may not be fully inclusive. For me, the word queer is inclusive of us all.

I am different. I am queer. Perhaps the pride I feel in using the word queer myself, is that it reminds me now that I didn't let hate-mongers bury me with it when I was younger.

COUNTER POINT by Jason Coble

As a 24 year old openly gay male, I have to say I don't think the word "queer" is very empowering. I understand completely that regaining strength from something that has been used to hurt people for so long is a good thing, but I think the word queer itself is demeaning. It is not only used for people who are GLBT, but also for things that are considered "not right," abnormal, "funny," or strange. I'm not comfortable being put into any of those categories. Queer has a nasty ring to it. Whether it comes from another member of the GLBT community, or is yelled out by a passing bigot, it isn't pleasant in any way.

I have been lucky that my family, and friends are all very accepting of my sexual orientation. I am sure they too would find it hurtful to hear someone use the word queer to describe me.

I think the word has too many negative connotations to even try to find a way to "take it back." What an odd idea that is... "let's take a word that has been cruelly demeaning to our community for a hundred years, and use it to describe ourselves? I feel that's like saying, "hey, I know the definition of the word is hateful and all, but I think if I use it to describe myself, its less hateful?" Wrong. Same definition, just another voice saying it. I can understand the idea of making it seem like hearing the word is less bothersome to us, but the word spawned from hate. Nothing can change its history of hurting many generations of gay men and lesbians.

The dictionary's definition of queer is: Deviating from the expected normal. Strange. Even the analogies for the word are negative: odd, strange, giddy, faint, deranged, shady, counterfeit. I just don't see how using this word for ourselves is helping out our cause.

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What's That About?



Readers write or email
"What's That About?"
editors with questions
about gay and lesbian issues.



One reader asked on one of the VFP Surveys: "What about doing a restaurant review?" Another survey respondent suggests: "Perhaps there could be a travel column about GLBT friendly vacations spots."

VFP Editors respond: Thanks for the terrific idea. We would love to have a restaurant review and a travel column. The columns could possibly rotate from month to month. Not only would we want to rate trips or eateries on quality and ambience, but we know VFP readers would especially want to know whether GLBT people feel welcome and comfortable there.

We need someone who is willing to write the column on a monthly basis, or willing to be responsible to find other people who are willing to write about their experiences and submit them on a regular basis to the paper. If you are interested in writing one of these columns on a regular basis for the VFP, call or email us and let's talk about the possibilities. (610-432-5449 <liztrish@aol.com>)

ROBERTA KREIDER BEGINS NEW BOOK

PFLAG member, Roberta Kreider, editor of a book that contains the faith stories of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people, is currently working on a new collection of stories about GLBT couples and their faith and spiritual journeys.

"I have about thirty stories from couples for this new book," says Roberta in an interview with VFP last Sunday, "Three are from Lehigh Valley couples." She hopes the book, which is to be called, "Together in Love; Faith Stories of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Couples," will be ready for publication in about a year.

COMMUNITY MOURNS JANET T. MARKEE

Trish and I attended the very moving service at MCC celebrating the life of Janet T. Markee. We realized that four years ago we happened to be at the first Lehigh Valley Lesbians meeting Janet attended when she moved back to the area and where she met her partner Nadine. Janet was a dedicated activist, she joined PA-GALA that night with a generous Rainbow Team contribution asking us to identify her on the contributor page as, "Janet is back." Just a few days before she died she sent a contribution to Gail Hoover's campaign.

Many people at the service mentioned Janet's passion and delight for birds. A Lutheran Minister friend told how Janet's bird Honey frequently perched on Janet's shoulder and sometimes left little "presents" there which Janet took in stride as part of her relationship with nature.

While there was great joy in the service, there was also sadness and Trish and I felt it deeply as we walked to our van. But once we got there, we couldn't help laughing over the fact that while we had been in the church the van had been completely covered with bird poop. We couldn't help rejoicing in this reminder of something Janet seemed to fully understand. That the cycle of life and spirit has, among other things, a pretty good sense of humor.

A VIEW FROM A DYKE

BY LIZ BRADBURY



RANTS, PEEVES, AND HOPE

The Wealth Myth: Do gays make more money than straights? No, it's a myth created by our own community. Gay magazines have perpetuated this fallacy to help sell advertising to mainstream companies. But the myth hurts us. It implies we don't have kids. It implies we are actually "better off" in the workplace than straight people. It's based on a stereotypical profile that we are all highly educated, highly paid yuppies living in dual income households with no family obligations and money to burn. In reality it is loyalty not wealth that steers our spending. We support corporations that have pro-GLBT policies and shun those who are anti-GLBT. That is actually one of our biggest strengths.

Annoying Neighbors: If you think you have annoying, messy, neighbors, what if you were Canada? Here in the US, the CEO of ALCOA, Paul O'Neill, earned 56 million dollars last year while Alcoa was rated the #1 corporation for polluting the environment. So how do we punish this guy? The President appoints him the Secretary of the Treasury.

AIDS on the rise. Why?: A number of articles in the mainstream press tout an increase in HIV/AIDS cases among young gay males. Actually, it's on the rise in all populations of young people. AIDS activists fault the makers of AIDS medications for their photo ads that imply AIDS victims will look like buff pin-up boys by simply taking a pill.

PA-GALA sees another factor. Questionnaires to school board candidates show a significant number are anti-AIDS education. Many teens are not allowed to learn how not to get AIDS. This is just one way GLBT people and other minorities are discriminated against every day. Honest education is the key to ending the AIDS epidemic. We must insist that all schools teach AIDS education without bigotry.

When people say... "I never thought I'd turn out to be an activist until this happened to me." I tend to think, where the heck were they before "it happened to them"? It's Pride month, so take some time to recognize the efforts of those who work for the community, simply because it's the right thing to do.

Meanwhile, keep in mind that the religious right "tithes" its members into giving 10% of their yearly income to pseudo religious organizations whose mission is to insure that all GLBT people are denied basic human rights and condemned as immoral child molesting sinners. How much of your income or time do you donate to support the efforts of groups that fight for your rights? If you aren't a member of PA-GALA, or don't support candidates or organizations that support GLBT rights, who do you expect to do it for you? Don't wait until you get fired, or arrested, or are a victim of a hate crime to say, "I never thought I'd be an activist until..."

For our kids: GLBT kids deserve the same kind of experiences as straight kids. They must be allowed to meet, to plan dances and trips, get a boyfriend or girlfriend, have gay, lesbian and transgender adult role models, and learn that people like them have achieved incredible and wonderful things.

GLBT kids can't always rely on their parents to support them. Some will even be victims of family violence. It is the obligation of the entire adult GLBT community to become the families for our youth. Trish and I pledge VFP for at least one fund raiser a year for the new Lehigh Valley Youth Group. I hope other groups pledge their support as well. Pride itself could use this festival as a fund raiser for that group. How much more empowering would it be if all the efforts ultimately raised money and support for GLBT youth.

Read about the new LV GLBT Youth Group on page 2.

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ANOTHER VIEW FROM ANOTHER DYKE

BY TRISH SULLIVAN

Lehigh Valley PFLAG made its first presentation of information about GLBT youth to public school teachers, staff and parents at Liberty High School in Bethlehem in April. Don Kohn, Donna Massare and Eric Yurkanin were the speakers and attending the presentation were members of the Liberty High School gay-straight alliance, several parents and members of the Liberty High School Staff.

Don Kohn, President of LV PFLAG, who spearheaded this project, began by talking about why derogatory comments have no place in schools. He described the profiles of the perpetrators of several tragic school shootings and reminded the audience that in each case the shooters were harassed and ridiculed by other students.

Donna Massare spoke about her experiences as an out lesbian attending a Catholic school for girls in the 1970s. Donna, a popular student who was elected to the student council, felt no discrimination or harassment from other students. She says, however, that the staff and faculty spoke openly against homosexuality and pointed to her as an example. She observed that the students who attended the PFLAG discussion at Liberty were bright, self-assured and out, and like herself have and will probably continue to deal positively with their sexual orientation. But she also noted that for programs like these to make a real difference, schools must make all students participate because teens who need the most support are probably unlikely to voluntarily attend.

For Eric Yurkanin, a teacher, speaking out at the school was especially courageous.

VFP: Why did you choose to speak out now?

Eric: One Sunday evening at church (MCCLV), one of my students from a few years ago, attended for the first time. After service we talked briefly. He told me that coming to terms with his own orientation would have been much easier if he had known I was gay, too. I became a teacher to have a positive affect on others -- this was the first time I realized that being out could have that kind of positive affect on my students.

VFP: What are some ways schools can help and support gay and lesbian youth?

Eric: I hear too many people using words like "homo" or "fag" in derogatory ways or telling jokes that use gays as the punch line. I wish more teachers were trained in tolerance and not afraid to use their knowledge in front of their students. Teachers and students need to stop such comments and explain why they are inappropriate and unacceptable. I think we could all do a lot of "good" by just stopping the "bad" (and bad-mouthing) around us.

VFP: What can the gay and lesbian community do to help make the high school experience better for the gay and lesbian youth?

Eric: As I mentioned earlier, my one student would have just wanted me to be out -- that's all. He needed someone to identify with. I would have had to do nothing but be myself. And so that's my advice: Be yourself, be a role model.

VFP: Are there any other thoughts you would like to share with the readers of the Valley Free Press?

Eric: Deciding to speak at Liberty was difficult, but it proved to be one of the most incredible experiences I have ever had. I can say that I have truly started to make a difference in my life and the lives of others.

VFP congratulates LV-PFLAG for going into the public school system with their message of diversity and acceptance. As for Donna and Eric, what greater service could anyone do for the community than serve as healthy, successful role models for our youth.

LV-PFLAG has established a speaker's bureau to continue this program in the Lehigh Valley schools. To volunteer, contact LV-PFLAG at 610-967-5219, or stop by their booth today at the Pride Festival.

**"HE TOLD ME
THAT COMING
TO TERMS
WITH
HIS OWN
ORIENTATION
WOULD HAVE
BEEN MUCH
EASIER IF HE
HAD KNOWN I
WAS GAY
TOO."**

POP QUIZ

1. What is the age range in which a heterosexual U.S. man is most likely to acknowledge having once had a homosexual experience?
A. 18-29 B. 30-39 C. 40-49 D. 50-65
2. At what age range is a heterosexual U.S. woman most likely to acknowledge having once had a homosexual experience?
A. 18-29 B. 30-39 C. 40-49 D. 50-65
3. The ACLU recently appointed 35 year old Anthony D. Romero as its new executive director. Romero is the first _____ to direct this group.
A. Latino B. Italian C. Gay D. Transgender
4. In what city is the Lucy / Desi Museum?
A. Jamestown, N.Y. B. West Jamestown, N.Y.
C. Burbank, California D. Amsterdam, Holland
5. Who narrated the Celluloid Closet?
A. Nathan Lane B. Tom Hanks
C. Quentin Crisp D. Lily Tomlin
6. Who re-recorded "Once I Had Secret Love," for the ending music of Celluloid Closet?
A. Elton John B. Doris Day
C. k.d.lang D. Barbara Streisand
7. What was the name of the movie in which Greta Garbo uttered the phrase, "I want to be alone."
A. Grand Hotel B. Dinner at 8 C. 81/2 D. Ninotchka
8. What gay writer has a larger than life bronze statue of himself in NY's Bear Mountain State Park, with a copy of his poem "Song of the Open Road"?
A. Whitman B. Vidal C. Haring D. T. Williams
9. What lesbian author wrote "My Antonia" in 1918, and "Death comes for the Archbishop" in 1927?
A. May Sarton B. Willa Cather
C. Emily Dickinson D. Hilda Doolittle
10. Of the eight Lehigh Valley candidates PA-GALA endorsed for the Primary election in May how many won? A. 0 B. 2 C. 5 D. 7

We believe it would improve the quality of life in the Lehigh Valley if all people were legally protected from unfair discrimination based upon actual or perceived: race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry or place of birth, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status, age, handicap or disability, or use of a guide animal, in the areas of employment, housing, and public accommodation.

PA-GALA Valley Free Press
Allentown Human Relations Commission
Safe-Space at Lehigh University

PFLAG Lehigh Valley
ACCO - A Chorus Celebrating Women
GLORA
Pride of the LV
LV Gay Men's Chorus
NCC GLB Student Union

The Lehigh Valley Labor Party
EQUAL! at Lucent
Metropolitan Community Church LV
OutThere-Cedar Crest

6th Street Shelter Allentown
LV Community Action Committee
GLEE at Air Products

FACT
AIDS OUTREACH
The Unitarian Universalist Church LV
GLOSS
LEPOCO
GLISN of Dun & Bradstreet
AIDS Service Center

Theatre Outlet
Integrity-Bethlehem
The Lehigh Valley Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Civic Theater
19th Street Theater
The Latin Alliance
The Enigma Players
New Covenant Family Ministries
Properties of Merit

Allentown City Democratic Committee
Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem

To add your organization to this list, call 610-432-5449 or email VFP (litzfish@aol.com).

QUOTE

8

"We don't want to know who they are."
-Lee R. Raymond, chairman and CEO of Exxon Mobil Corp., in response to a reporter's question May 30 about why the company does not actively reach out to gay and lesbian employees as it does to other employees.
HRC and other GLBT activist groups have called for a boycott of Exxon Mobil.

WHAT'S PRIDE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

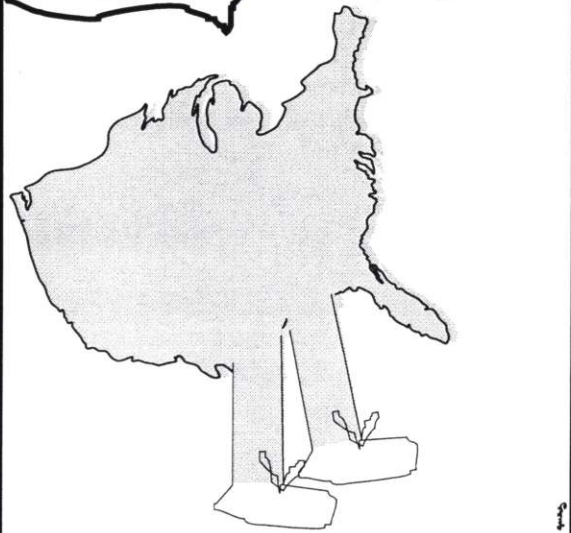
...Because many of us can be "invisible" as GLBT people if we choose, these (Pride Festival) events are our community's unique opportunity to display our diversity, to show the public - and each other - who we are. They are also an occasion to acknowledge our successes and plan for the work that is yet to be done.
Candace Gingrich, HRC Project Manager

INTERNATIONAL PRIDE THEME

Celebrate Diversity is the international theme for this year's 8th Annual Lehigh Valley Pride Festival and for GLBT Pride Festivals happening throughout the month of June all over the world. Congratulations to Pride President Allyson Hamm and the LV Pride Board from the Valley Free Press, on the achievement of this important celebration of our community's Pride!

Distelfink © 6/01 "Blame it on the Sunshine State."

If I'd just kept a condom on this thing in November we wouldn't be having all this trouble.



How can you trust a guy named Jeb?

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